

**Harvard Allston Task Force**  
Meeting Minutes  
Monday, June 12, 2006  
Allston Brighton Resource Center  
6:30 p.m.

**I. Attendance:**

**Harvard Allston Task Force**

Paul Berkeley  
John Bruno  
John Cusack  
Rita DiGesse  
Brian Gibbons  
Michael Hanlon  
Millie Hollum McLaughlin  
Bruce Houghton  
Harry Mattison  
Ray Mellone

**Boston Redevelopment Authority**

Gerald Autler  
Linda Kowalcky

**Mayor's Office of Jobs and Community Services**

Dave Bassette  
Maddie Deed  
Jovita Fontanez  
Alice Froley  
Cathy Snedeker

**Harvard University**

John Audi  
Harris Band  
Will Donham  
Mirtha Garcia  
Kevin McCluskey  
Dan Rabinovitz  
Alison Reinhardt  
Mary Power  
Maile Takahashi

The meeting began at 6:40 p.m. Gerald Autler explained that the BRA decided to hold the meeting at the Allston Brighton Resource Center to showcase the services it has to offer and to introduce the Task Force and community members to the Resource Center staff.

Gerald acknowledged that at times the Task Force and the BRA have different priorities for what should be discussed so the majority of the meeting's agenda would be dedicated to determining a schedule for the priorities that the Task Force wants to address. Gerald said that the BRA's scoping determination for Harvard's Institutional Master Plan Notification Form (IMP NF) will be released on Thursday, June 15<sup>th</sup>.

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Gerald introduced Cathy Snedeker, manager of the Allston Brighton Resource Center. Within the Mayor's Office for Jobs and Community Services (JCS) are three full-service career centers, including the Allston Brighton Resource Center, South Boston Resource Center and Roxbury Resource Center. The Career Centers aim to provide the training people need to achieve sustainable employment and developing a career path, not just find a job. Training programs include those in the following industries: office support/computer/data entry; health care, including administration and direct care; truck driving, including training individuals to get their commercial drivers license; biotech; and hospitality. The training for these industries is largely funded by grants or federal dollars. For more information on Jobs and Community Services go to: [www.cityofboston.gov/bra/jcs/commServices.asp](http://www.cityofboston.gov/bra/jcs/commServices.asp)

### Questions:

1. What is the Career Center's strategy to provide outreach to people affected by major layoffs? (audience)

*The employer contacts the state and/or the Career Center. The state has a rapid response team that will meet with employees affected. In the case of the Kmart on Western Avenue closing, staff members of the Allston Brighton Resource center went over to Kmart and met with employees. Of the approximately 85 employees affected by the Kmart closing, about 30 people met with the Allston Brighton Resource Center staff. Cathy explained that once employees seek assistance with the state then the Resource Center has access to their contact information and can contact them directly to let them know about their services. Additionally, the Resource Center plans on advertising in the Allston-Brighton Tab and at local libraries.*

2. What is the Back Streets program and is there data available for Western Avenue? (audience)

*The Allston Brighton Resource Center is partnered with the backstreet program, which is part of the BRA. Gerald said that the BRA just finished its latest calculations for employment by neighborhoods and that he would share this with the Task Force at a later date.*

The meeting was turned over to Kevin McCluskey, Harvard University, Government and Community Affairs. Kevin informed Task Force members and community members present about the improvements being made to Harvard Stadium. Lights and a retractable bubble will be added to the stadium for the winter months but that these additions will not be visible from outside the stadium. Many of Harvard's athletics fields are located on marsh land and the fields become very unusable. The bubble will increase the available usage of the stadium for Harvard athletic teams and give Harvard more opportunities to respond to community requests to use the stadium. An audience member asked what the permitting process was for Harvard to make these improvements to the stadium. Kevin said that because it is an internal reconstruction project on a historic building, Harvard only had to get approval from the Historical Landmark commission.

Kevin said that as Harvard enters its development stage in Allston it wants to continue to be a good neighbor to the Allston community. Both Harvard and the community need to come up with solutions for Harvard to continue to have a positive presence in the community and to provide a lasting, practical, and real impact.

Kevin announced that on June 15<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m. there is a reception at the Harvard Business School to unveil the Allston Brighton Oral History Project. The project included many Task Force members and was produced by the Allston Brighton Historical Society and sponsored by Harvard.

Gerald announced that on Friday, June 23<sup>rd</sup> at 11:30 a.m. there will be a ribbon cutting ceremony for the opening of the Allston Brighton Resource Center.

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### Questions:

1. Please clarify the review process for how community organizations can apply for funding from Harvard? (Harry Mattison)

*Kevin explained that it was more of an organic process, though some funding opportunities have gone through a formal process, such as the After-School initiative.*

2. Would Harvard consider setting up a formal process rather than relying on a grassroots process? (Bruce Houghton)

*Kevin said that he didn't think that the system Harvard uses is necessarily broken and questioned whether a formal structure would work best but agreed that the Task Force and the Harvard Community should find a system that will allow people to feel the most comfortable.*

3. Having a structure would eliminate confusion and allow for continuity. Without a structure it was unclear whether funding changes from year to year. (Bruce Houghton)

*Kevin said that much of what Harvard has given to the community does go on from year to year because Harvard tries to have a lasting impact within the community, however, Harvard cannot guarantee that every Harvard community funded project will be granted each year.*

4. What is Harvard's annual community contribution? (Harry Mattison)

*In addition to major Harvard programs like the After School Initiative and 20/20/2000, Kevin estimated that it was around \$75,000 to \$100,000 each year for Boston (though he couldn't confirm the precise dollar amount), with the majority going to Allston Brighton and some going to Mission Hill and the Fenway area.*

5. What percentage of Harvard's endowment was going toward community benefits? (audience)

*Harvard pays taxes on the land and buildings that it owns that are not in institutional use and pays Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) on the land and buildings that are under institutional use. The purpose of the endowment is to allow Harvard to continue to fulfill its academic mission of teaching and research, which has far reaching benefits to society. Additionally, Harvard is a 2 billion dollar a year operation and as a result there are beneficial economic benefits to the host communities and beyond. Harvard is committed to developing a meaningful community benefits program in partnership with the community while continuing to accomplish its academic mission.*

Gerald said that he wanted to dedicate the rest of the meeting for the Task Force to discuss meeting topics for subsequent meetings. Stephan Behnisch, the architect for Harvard's science building in Allston, will come to the July 10<sup>th</sup> Task Force meeting to share his preliminary design concepts. Gerald suggested five other topics that he thought the Task Force might want to discuss based on their comments at other meetings and questions raised during the scoping session. The topics include:

- interim uses for Harvard's vacant buildings;
- jobs/workforce/education;
- community benefits;
- transportation; and
- public realm.

Paul Berkely: The schedule should be based on milestones in the Master Planning process.

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Gerald: The major milestones are when Harvard files its Project Notification Forms (PNF), which is expected to take place in late September/early October, and when Harvard files its Institutional Master Plan Notification Form (IMP NF) for its new Institutional Master Plan (IMP). This is a fluid process and that specific projects would be looked at in the context of Harvard's Master Plan.

Bruce H: Can Gerald write up the steps for the BRA approval process and provide clarification on what kind of input and authority the committee actually has.

Ray Mellone: The role of the Harvard Task Force is tied to the Master Plan review process and involves scoping Harvard's Master Plan amendment and looking at specific proposed Harvard projects. Ray suggested that the Task Force should have a nomenclature discussion so that all members are aware of the definitions of certain terms like mitigation and linkage.

The community needs to come together and define the identity of North Allston and that without an identity the community doesn't get the respect that it deserves. He suggested that identity could begin with St. Anthony's church because of its strong historical roots, rich tradition and location in the core of the community. The Task Force needs to look at the basic needs of the community as opposed to a "smart growth" model.

Bruce H.: The Task Force should look at how you define a community, what forms the fabric of a community and consider what will be left of Allston once Harvard's expansion is complete.

John Bruno: Part of North Allston's main identity comes through its housing. Housing should be added to the list of topics to be discussed at future meetings. . Harvard and the community should be creative in their approach to housing.

John Cusack: Setting specific topics for specific dates will allow the Task Force members to do "homework" prior to the meeting so they can come in prepared.

Harry M.: The Task Force could break down in to teams to discuss particular topics. This discussion should continue at the next Task Force meeting so that they can work through these issues together as a Task Force.

Audience: How many jobs have been lost in the North Allston neighborhood?

Ray: Gerald and the BRA are getting those facts and figures to the Task Force. The Task Force doesn't have enough data on issues such as the neighborhood demographics, the economy, jobs, education, and housing, etc.

Mike Hanlon: Harvard should provide a public safety building with ambulance and fire services for both Harvard's campus and the community.

Ray M.: The point of this meeting's agenda was for the Task Force to dictate what the agenda for future meetings should be.

Gerald: He will come back to the Task Force with a proposed schedule of topics and meetings that are coordinated with the internal review process. He suggests the Task Force discuss how each of the topics should be addressed and define an approach and questions. He will circulate the proposed schedule to the Task Force members prior to the next meeting.

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Kevin McCluskey: Harvard is not in the practice of purchasing residential homes and that in the past when it has been done it was because of unique situations.

Audience: Could a treasury be set up for the Task Force and community members to seek professional assistance in analyzing Harvard's development plans?

Ray M: Disagrees with this idea and said that the Task Force members and community members know the neighborhood enough to know what is or is not good for it.

Gerald: Reiterated that the BRA has a large team assembled that is committed to representing the community's interest.

Brian Gibbons: The May 24<sup>th</sup> meeting minutes be corrected to reflect that he was at the May 24<sup>th</sup> Task Force meeting rather than Brian Golden.

The Task Force meeting closed at 8:55 p.m.